

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1178

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the office of regulatory assistance.

Brief Description: Addressing the office of regulatory assistance.

Sponsors: Representatives Appleton and Miloscia; by request of Office of Regulatory Assistance.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/31/11, 2/2/11 [DP];

Ways & Means: 2/15/11, 2/23/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/3/11, 62-36.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/6/11, 43-5.

House Concurred.

Passed House: 4/14/11, 71-26.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the expiration date for the Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA).
- Adds new reporting requirements.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Taylor, Ranking Minority Member; Overstreet, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Condotta, Darneille, Dunshee, Hurst, McCoy and Miloscia.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Hunter, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Orcutt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Chandler, Cody, Dickerson, Haigh, Haler, Hinkle, Hudgins, Hunt, Kagi, Kenney, Ormsby, Parker, Pettigrew, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist, Springer and Wilcox.

Staff: Wendy Polzin (786-7137).

Background:

Originally created as the Permit Assistance Center in 1995, the Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA) has evolved from its original mission of providing the public with information on environmental permitting and regulatory laws to a primary point of contact for information on and assistance in navigating the state's environmental and business regulatory systems.

Specifically, the ORA:

- provides information regarding permits;
- maintains a website that provides extensive information on permit laws, including relevant local, state, federal, and tribal laws;
- acts as a service center;
- provides project scoping services;
- offers, under agreement, coordinated permit processes for certain projects; and
- participates in multiagency permitting teams.

In 2010 the ORA was subject to a sunset review by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC). The following recommendations were made by the JLARC:

- the Legislature should continue the ORA without further sunset reviews;
- the ORA should include in its biennial reports information on tasks that are and are not working; and
- the ORA should improve its reports to the Legislature for purposes of tracking previous performance targets.

Summary of Bill:

The termination date for the ORA is repealed. The ORA is required to provide additional information in its biennial report to the Governor and the Legislature: (1) specific information on any difficulty encountered in provision of services, implementation of programs or processes, or use of tools; (2) trend reporting that allows comparisons between statements of goals and performance targets and the achievement of those goals and targets; and (3) recommendations on changes needed to make cost reimbursement, a fully coordinated permit process, multiagency permitting teams, and other processes effective. The duty of reporting the effects of rulemaking on the regulatory system to the Governor and the Legislature are transferred from the Office of Financial Management to the ORA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on June 29, 2011.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (State Government & Tribal Affairs):

(In support) The ORA should be continued. It helps people get through regulatory processes and works with state, local, and federal agencies in the permit process. The sunset review was included again in 1995 because of the changes made to the ORA's duties and functions.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means):

(In support) None.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (State Government & Tribal Affairs): Faith Lumsden, Office of Regulatory Assistance.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (State Government & Tribal Affairs): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): None.